

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1.-11. (Withdrawn)

12. (Currently Amended) A method of preventing the escape of natural, artificial, or therapeutic material through a defect in the annulus fibrosis of a spinal disc, comprising the steps of:

inserting a device relative to a defect in ~~[[an]]~~ the annulus fibrosis; and
occluding the defect by:

a) allowing the device to expand to a larger size,

b) allowing the device to return to a memorized shape,

~~e) allowing the device to solidify,~~ or

~~[[d)]]~~ c) by adding additional devices which physically cooperate following installation.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein:

the step of inserting the device includes compacting the device into a compressed form for introduction relative to the defect.

14. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the device includes a flexible screen or patch.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the device inserted into the defect includes an anchor, the method further including the step of anchoring [[each]] the device in place relative to the defect by engagement of the anchor with tissue proximate to the defect.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[12]]~~ 13, wherein the device includes a liquid or gel which solidifies following ~~injection~~ insertion of the device into the ~~defective area~~ defect.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, ~~including~~ wherein the device includes a hydrogel or elastomer.

18. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the device occludes the defect while allowing compression and distraction of the disc with respect to normal spinal movement.

19. (New). The method of claim 14, wherein the flexible screen is a metal screen.

20. (New) The method of claim 14, wherein the flexible screen comprises titanium.

21. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein the anchor includes a wire.

22. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein the anchor includes a spike.